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RUSTIC
RHYMES
& BALLADS.



By Mrs E. T. Corbett.

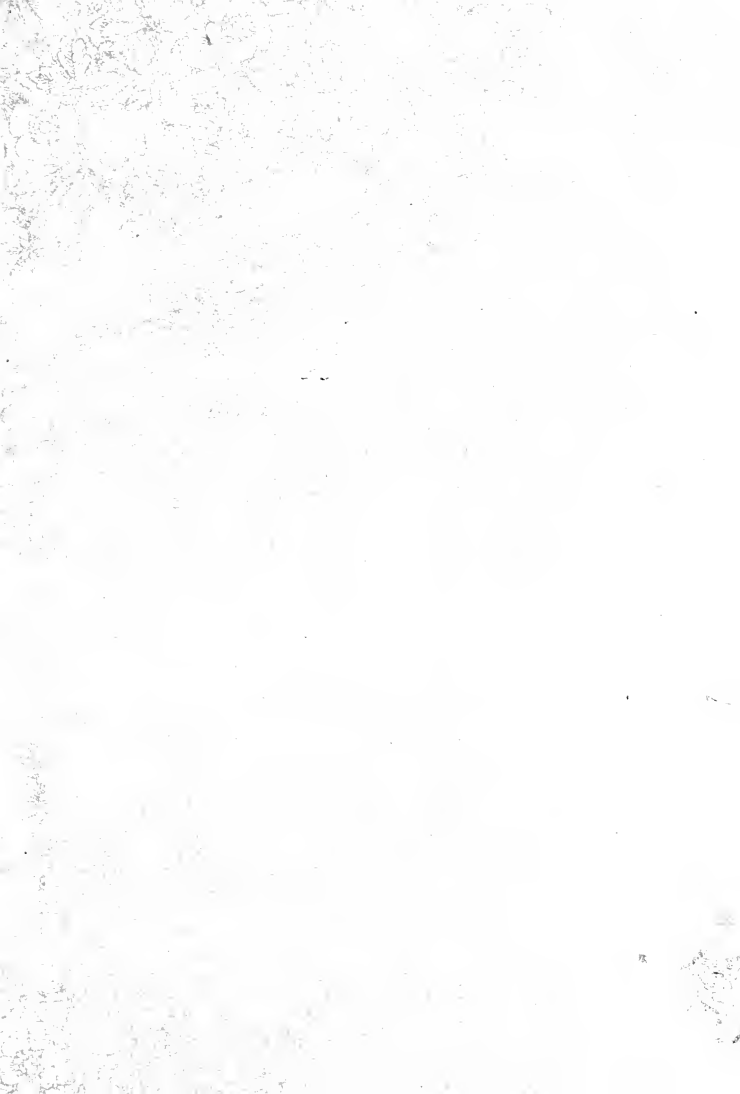
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Rustic
Rhymes and Ballads.

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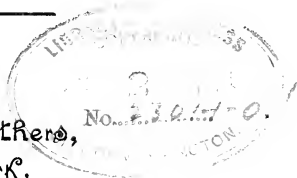
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by

Mrs. E. T. Corbett.

1883 :

Gillies Brothers,
New York.



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By E. T. CORBETT.

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The Ol' Deacon's Lament.

YES, I've been deacon of our church
Nigh on to fifty year,
Walked in the way of dooty, too,
And kep' my conscience clear.
I've watched the children growin' up,
Seen brown locks turnin' gray,
But never saw sech doin's yet
As those I've seen to-day.

This church was built by godly men,
To glorify the Lord,
In seventeen hundred eighty-eight:
Folks could n't then afford
Carpets and cushings and sech like—
The seats were jest plain wood,
Too narrer for the sleepy ones,
In prayer we allus stood.

And when the hymns were given out
I tell you it was grand
To hear our leader start the tunes
With tunin' fork in hand!
Then good old "China," "Mear," and all
Were heard on Sabbath days,
And men and women, girls and boys,
J'ined in the song of praise.

But that old pulpit was *my* pride—
Jest eight feet from the ground
They 'd reared it up—on either side
A narrer stairs went down;
The front and eends were fitly carved
With Scriptor stories all—
Findin' of Moses, Jacob's dream,
And sinful Adam's fall.

Jest room inside to put a cheer,
The Bible on the ledge
(I'll own I *did* get narvous when
He shoved it to the edge).
There, week by week, the parson stood,
The Scriptor to expound;
There, man and boy, I've sot below,
And not a fault was found.

Of course I've seen great changes made
 (And fought agenst 'em too),
But first a choir was interdooosed,
 Then cushings in each pew.
Next, boughten carpet for the floor,
 And then, that very year,
We got our new melodeon,
 And the big shandyleer !

Well! well! I tried to keep things straight—
 I went to ev'ry meetin',
And voted "No" to all they said,
 But found my influ'nce fleetin'!
At last the worst misfortin' fell—
 I *must* blame Deacon Brown:
He helped the young folks when they said
 The pulpit should come down.

They laughed at all those pious scenes
 I'd found so edifyin';
Said, "When the parson rose to preach
 He looked a'most like flyin';"
Said that "Elijah's chariot
 Jest half-way up had tarried;"
And Deacon Brown sot by and laughed,
 And so the p'int was carried.

This was last week. The carpenters
Have nearly made an end—
Excoose my feelin's. Seems to me
As ef I 'd lost a friend.
“It made their necks ache, lookin' up,”
Was what the folks did say—
More lookin' up would help us all
In this degin'rate day.

The church won't never seem the same
(I 'm half afeard) to *me*,
Under the preachin' of the truth
I 've ben so used to be.
And now—to see our parson stand
Like any common man,
With jest a railin' round his desk—
I do n't believe I can !

The Foreclosure of the Mortgage.

WALK right in the settin'-room, Deacon; it's
all in a muddle, you see,
But I had n't no heart to right it, so I've jest let
everything be.
Besides, I 'm a-goin' to-morrer—I calk'late to start
with the dawn—
And the house won't seem so home-like if it's all
upshot and forlorn.
I sent off the children this mornin': they both on
'em begged to stay,
But I thought 't would be easier, mebbe, if I was
alone to-day.
For this was the very day, Deacon, jest twenty
year ago,
That Caleb and me moved in; so I could n't forgit
it, you know.
We was so busy and happy!—we'd ben married a
month before—
And Caleb *would* clear the table and brush up the
kitchen floor.

He said I was tired, and he'd help me; but law!
that was always his way—
Always handy and helpful, and kind, to the very
last day.
Do n't you remember, Deacon, that winter I broke
my arm?
Why, Caleb skursely left me, not even to 'tend to
the farm.
There night and mornin' I saw him, a-settin' so
close to my bed,
And I knew him in spite of the fever that made me
so wild in my head.
He never did nothin' to grieve me, until he left me
behind—
Yes, I know, there's no use in talkin', but somehow
it eases my mind,
And he sot such store by *you*, Deacon, I need n't
tell you now,
But unless he had your jedgment, he never would
buy a cow.
Well, our cows is gone, and the horse too—poor
Caleb was fond of Jack,
And I cried like a fool this mornin' when I looked
at the empty rack.
I hope he'll be kindly treated: 't would worry poor
Caleb so
If them Joneses should whip the critter—but I
s'pose he ain't like to know.
I've ben thinkin' it over lately, that when Mary
sickened and died,
Her father's sperrit was broken, for she was allus
his pride.

He wasn't never so cheery; he'd smile, but the
smile wa'n't bright,
And he didn't care for the cattle, though once
they'd ben his delight.
The neighbors all said he was ailin', and they tried
to hint it to me;
They talked of a church-yard cough; but, oh! the
blind are those who *won't* see.
I never believed he was goin' till I saw him a-layin'
here dead.—
There, there! don't be anxious, Deacon, I have n't
no tears to shed.
I've tried to keep things together—I've ben slavin'
early and late—
But I could n't pay the int'rest, nor git the farm-
work straight.
So of course I've gone behindhand, and if the
farm should sell
For enough to pay the mortgage, I s'pose 't will be
doin' well.
I've prayed against all hard feelin's, and to walk
as a Christian ought,
But it's hard to see Caleb's children turned out of
the place he bought;
And readin' that text in the Bible 'bout widows and
orphans, you know,
I can 't think the folks will prosper who are willin'
to see us go.
But there! I'm a-keepin' you, Deacon, and it's
nigh your time for tea.
“*Won't I come over?*” No, thank you; I feel bet-
ter alone, you see.

Besides, I could n't eat nothin'; whenever I 've tried
 it to-day
 There 's somethin' here that chokes me. I 'm nar-
 vous, I s'pose you 'll say.
 "I 've worked too hard?" No, I have n't. Why
 it's work that keeps me strong;
 If I sot here thinkin', I 'm sartain my heart would
 break before long.
 Not that I care about livin'. I 'd ruther be laid
 away
 In the place I 've marked beside Caleb, to rest till
 the jedgment-day.
 But there 's the children to think of—that makes
 my dooty clear,
 And I 'll try to foller it, Deacon, though I 'm tired
 of this earthly speer.
 Good-by, then. I shan't forgit you, nor all the
 kindness you 've showed;
 'T will help to cheer me to-morrer, as I go on my
 lonely road.
 For—What are you sayin', Deacon? I need n't—I
 need n't go?
You 've bought the mortgage, and I can stay?
 Stop! say it over slow.—
 Jest wait now—jest wait a minute—I 'll take it in
 bime-by
 That I can stay. Why, Deacon, I do n't know what
 makes me cry!
 I haven't no words to thank you. Ef Caleb was
 only here,
 He 'd sech a head for speakin', he 'd make my feel-
 in's clear.

There 's a picter in our old Bible of an angel from
the skies,
And though he has n't no great-coat, and no spec-
tacles on his eyes,
He looks jest like you, Deacon, with your smile so
good and trew,
And whenever I see that picter, 't will make me
think of you.
The children will be so happy! Why, Debby will
most go wild;
She fretted so much at leavin' her garding behind,
poor child!
And law! I'm as glad as Debby, ef only for jest
one thing—
Now I can tend the posies I planted there last
spring
On Caleb's grave: he loved the flowers, and it seems
as ef he'll know
They're a-bloomin' all around him while he's
sleepin' there below.

Old Abel's Expezience.

SO you're thinking of marriage, Joseph—well,
well, I've naught to say ;
Most young folks (and some of the old ones) seem
to incline that way.
But I've always liked you, Joseph ; you've been very
kind to me,
And to know you're coming to trouble, why, it
makes me sorry, you see.

There now, Joseph, you're angry—'t was foolish in
me, no doubt ;
I did n't mean to say it, but somehow the words
slipped out.
You'll have to forgive me, Joseph? you know I'm
silly and old,—
Shake hands—and I'll tell you a story that has
never yet been told ;
And perhaps when my story's ended, you'll be
ready, my friend, to say,
“ Old Abel has very good reason for his doubts and
fears to-day.”

I was sixty-five last birthday—I'm gray and wrinkled, 't is true ;
But forty years ago, Joseph, I was young and as spry as you,
And Amy said I was handsome—how proud it made me then !
Not the praise, but the thought that Amy preferred me to other men.

She was a little beauty, sweet and dimpled and fair,
You never saw such a mouth, Joseph, nor such brown eyes and hair.

And she had such a coaxing way, too, that—I was a fool, I know,
And I'm hardly cured of my folly, though it's forty years ago.

Amy and I were playmates ; we went to school together ;
I carried her books and her basket through summer or winter weather.

Later, at husking frolics, at quilting or apple bee,
I was always her chosen sweetheart, and that was bliss for me.

Time and thoughts and service gladly to her I gave ;
She was my queen, my idol—I was her willing slave.
And so, when she was twenty, and I was twenty-five,
We were married ; I thought that I was the happiest man alive.

I fairly cried when the parson pronounced us man
and wife,
For had n't I won the angel I'd been worshipping
all my life ?
Well, the wedding was fairly over, and I thought to
settle down ;
I'd built and furnished a cottage as pretty as any
in town.

Whatever I knew she fancied I could n't rest till
I bought,
So in trying to please my darling, I spent far more
than I ought.

But when she smiled, and called me "*dear* Abel,"
and praised my taste,
What did I care if the neighbors talked of folly
and waste ?
For a little while I was happy : too soon I was forced
to see
That Amy could be neglectful, and even cruel to me.
When sometimes I hinted gently that the house was
n't very neat,
Or left the food untasted that was scarcely fit to eat,
She'd answer me so harshly, and say such cutting
things,
They gave me many a heartache : ah ! *words* have
terrible stings !
At last I saw it plainly—her life too dull had grown ;
She was tired of her homely duties—tired of seeing
me alone.

I was always content and happy just at her side to be,

But she—and that was bitter—found something
wanting in *me*.

It's too long a story, Joseph, to tell you how I strove
To please and interest Amy, and to keep her fading
love ;

My farm was left untended, my stock to ruin went,
While we journeyed about and idled, till my little
fortune was spent ;

Then back we went to our cottage—it never had
been a *home* ;

It could only grow more cheerless in the weary
years to come.

Weary and dreary I found them, till I grew to hate
my life,

And to think hard thoughts of all women, because
I was grieved in my wife.

One day—can I ever forget it?—we'd been married
just seven years—

I went out as usual, wretched, leaving Amy in
angry tears.

As I walked I found myself praying that God
would send help to me,

Never thinking—oh, *never* thinking—of what the
answer might be !

Before that day was over I stood by Amy's bed,
And saw her peaceful and smiling and beautiful—
yes, and—dead !

I had said my love was over, but then I knew I
was wrong ;

Knew when I kissed her, my darling, I'd been lov-
ing her all along ;

Knew when I looked at the baby, laid on her arm
to rest,

That my heart was dead within me, and I'd only a
stone in my breast.

Well, there's little more to tell you—I could n't bear
to stay

In the house I had built for Amy ; I sold it, and
moved away.

Where to go next, I knew not—all places were
much the same—

Till my nephew wrote and bade me come here,
and so I came.

Since then I've hardly noticed how the lonely
years went on ;

I've had chances for making money, but my energy
seemed gone.

Besides, I wanted so little, and why should I toil
and save,

When she who should have spent it rests in her
quiet grave ?

Now you see it's natural, Joseph, that I should have
doubts and fears

When I think of my disappointment, and all my
lonely years.

And yet—I've often thought it—if I was twenty-five,
And had my life all before me, and Amy once more
alive,

I'd marry her—never doubt it—and love her, yes !
all the same ;

So, after all is said, Joseph, you're not so much
to blame.

Deacon Thrush in Meeting.

LETTER FROM HANNAH BROWN TO SISTER HULDAH.

DEAR HULDY,—I must tell you 'bout the way
that our new deacon
Has sot the church folks by the ears—to use that
mode o' speakin'.
It's jest that orful voice of his 'n— But, law! I'd
best begin
And tell my story straight ahead, or else things
won't fit in.
Last spring we felt that we *was* blessed, to think
that Deacon Thrush
Was comin' up from Simpkinsville to live in Cedar-
brush.
“He'll be a piller in our church,” says father, the
first thing.
I wish he was a piller, HuldY, for then he could n't
sing.
He bought the Joneses' farm, you know, and moved
in last of May.
But that first time he come to church—I can't for-
git that day.

The openin' hymn was skursly read, the choir was
 just a-risin',
 When everybody turned and looked, a sound came
 so surprisin'.
 'T was somethin' like the old church bell, 't was
 somethin' like the ocean,
 'T was most like Bijah Morrow's bull, accordin' to
 my notion.
 It fairly drowned my playin' out; it left the tune
 behind:
 I never though that sech a voice could come from
 human kind.
 Like thunder-claps and factory gear through all our
 heads 't was ringin'.
 And, Huldry, it was nothin' else than Deacon Thrush
 a-singin'!
 Yes, there he sot, with book in hand, as peaceful
 and as calm
 As if he thought his dooty lay in murd'rin' that
 poor psalm.
 He never see the old folks' smiles; he never heerd
 the giggle
 That went up from the gallery. I watched our par-
 son wriggle
 And fidget in the pulpit, while poor father's head
 was shakin';
 But on went Deacon Thrush, and seemed real
 comfort to be takin'.
 And when we stopped he could n't stop, he'd got
 sech headway on;
 His voice went boomin' up and down, and flattin'
 so forlorn

That, though he tried to choke it off, it mixed up
with the text,
And made poor Parson Edwards skip his words,
and then look vexed.
I could n't hear that sermon, Huldry; my thoughts
was all astray,
A-wonderin' ef Deacon Thrush would sing agen
that day.
I might have spared my thinkin', though, for that
misguided man
Jest started off the same old way before the rest
began.
But when the second verse was reached, the choir
put down their books;
I stopped my playin'; back and forth we cast de-
spairin' looks;
The boys set up to laugh agen; the parson raised
his hand
And shouted, but the noise was sech we could n't
understand;
While Deacon Thrush was leanin' back, his eyelids
nearly closin',
A-singin' like an angel on a bed of clouds re-
posin'.
I'll have to cut my story short. Next day they
called a meetin',
Resolved to keep poor Deacon Thrush sech singin'
from repeatin'.
They 'p'inted Uncle Job to go with father and re-
quest
That Deacon Thrush would kindly leave the singin'
to the rest.

Perhaps you think he took the hint? Then, Huldy,
 you're mistaken.
 He listened till they 'd said their say; then, with the
 smiles a-breakin',
 He answered, jest as cheerfully: "Yes, brethering
 —yes, I know
 I have my faults: I sometimes git the tune a *leetle*
 slow,
 And sometimes, tryin' to ketch up, I take an extry
 flight,
 But takin' one verse with the next, that makes
 things jest come right.
 Now when you ask me not to sing, why, breth'ring,
 I can't do it:
 Singin's my dooty and delight, and I must jest pur-
 sue it.
 And while I tread this vale of tears, a sinful child
 of dust,
 Rejoicin' is my privilege—rejoice I will and
 must."
 Well, 't wa'n't no use, as Uncle Job and father said
 next day.
 The deacon, though a pious man, was sot in his
 own way.
 He 's sung in meetin' ever sence—there 's not a seat
 to spare;
 And, oh! sech sinful whisperin' and nudgin' every
 where!
 Then when the hymns is given out, you 'll hear a
 gineral "Hush!"
 While everybody's eyes and ears is turned to Dea-
 con Thrush.

He's skeered the little children so that most of 'em
keeps cryin';
The very horses in the shed won't stand no more
'thout tyin';
He makes the onconverted laugh, while godly
souls are grievin',
And yet he's sech a Christian man, it's almost past
believin'.
They're talkin' now of tryin' law, but father he
opposes,
And so I'll write agen next week to tell you how it
closes.

P.S.

Oh, Huldry! sech a curus thing! As Deacon Thrush
was bringin'
His apples home, he thought to cheer the way by
sacred singin'.
His team took fright and ran away. The neighbors
found him lyin'
All in a heap, and took him home, and now the
good man's dyin'.
And, Huldry, ef it is n't wrong, I'm glad to think
he's goin'
Where all the folks know how to sing, and he can
get a showin'!

Miss Minerva's Disappointment.

YES, Debby, 't was a disapp'intment; and though,
of course, I try
To look as ef I did n't mind it, I won't tell *you* a lie.
Ye see, he 'd ben a-comin' stiddy, and our folks sez,
sez they,
"It's you, Minervy, that he's arter; he's sure to
pop some day."
He 'd walk in with the evenin' shadders, set in that
easy-chair,
And praise my doughnuts, kinder sighin' about a
bachelor's fare.
And then his talk was so improvin', he made the
doctrines plain,
And when he 'd p'int a moral, allers looked straight
at Mary Jane.
She 'd laugh, and give sech silly answers that no one
could approve;
But, law! the men can't fool *me*, Debby—it is n't
sense they love.
It's rosy cheeks, and eyes a-sparklin'. Yes, yes, you
may depend
That when a woman's smart and handy, knows how
to bake and mend,

And keep her house and husband tidy, why, the
fools will pass her by,
Bekase she 's spent her youth a-learnin' their wants
to satisfy.
Now Mr. Reed was allers talkin' of what a wife
should be;
So, Debby, was it any wonder I thought his hints
meant me ?
And then when Mary Jane would giggle, and he
would turn so red,
Could *you* have guessed that they was courtin', when
not a word was said ?
It all came out at last so sudden. 'T was Wednesday
of last week,
When Mr. Reed came in quite flustered. Thinks I,
"He means to speak."
I 'll own my heart beat quicker, Debby; for though,
of course, it 's bold
To like a man before he offers, I thought him good
as gold.
Well, there we sot. I talked and waited; he hem-
med and coughed awhile:
He seemed so most oncommon bashful I could n't
help but smile.
I thought about my pine-tar balsam that drives a
cough away,
And how when we was fairly married I 'd dose him
every day.
Just then he spoke: "Dear Miss Minervy, *you* must
hev seen quite plain
That I 'm in love—" "I hev," I answers. Sez he,
"—*with Mary Jane.*"

" *What did I do?*" I nearly fainted, 't was sech a
 cruel shock;
 Yet there I had to set, as quiet as ef I was a rock,
 And hear about her "girlish sweetness," and "bud-
 din' beauty" too.
 Do n't talk to me of martyrs, Debby—I know what
 I've gone through.
 Well, that 's the end. The weddin 's settled for
 June, he 's in such haste.
 I've given her the spreads I quilted, so they won't
 go to waste.
 I'd planned new curtains for his study, all trimmed
 with bands of blue.
 I'm sure her cookin' never 'll suit him—he 's fond
 of eatin' too.
 Well, no, I wa' n't at meetin' Sunday. I do n't find
 Mr. Reed
 Is quite as edifyin' lately; he can't move *me*, indeed.
 And, Debby, when you see how foolish a man in
 love can act,
 You can 't hev sech a high opinion of *him*, and that 's
 a fact.
 " *I do n't look well?*" Spring weather, mebbe: it 's
 gittin' warm, you know.
 Good-by; I'm goin' to Uncle Jotham's, to stay a
 week or so.

Jerusha.

HANNAH, you know how hard I've worked and
slaved—yes, all my life,
But it's harder work than all the rest to live with
Jacob's wife!
For all she speaks so very low, and looks so mild
and meek,
I *knew* we could n't git along—I saw it that first
week.
Of course I've tried—I hope I know what Christian
dooty means—
But would n't it vex a saint to hear her sniff at pork
and beans?
Openin' the parlor windows too, and pullin' up the
shades,
Although I've told her every day how fast that car-
pet fades;
And lightin' up the house at nights—it makes me
mad to see
How Jacob humors all her whims—a savin' man
like he.
She brings in common stones and moss, and talks
of "Nater's beauties;"

Although two cows is comin' in, and that hired girl
 such a dunce.
 Of course 't will be a trial, for it's more than twenty
 year
 Since I've kept house for Jacob, and found my
 pleasure here.
 But trials is our earthly lot, as Parson Deane would
 say,
 And proper Christian fortitood can bear us on our
 way.
 Wonder who 'll make the butter now? I thought I
 should have cried
 When Brindle moo-ed at me last night, in spite of
 all my pride.
 But Jacob's wife was lookin' on—I would n't let *her*
 see
 Sech foolishness, or let her know what partin'
 means to me.
 "Why do n't I stay?" no, Hannah, no, I've ben the
 head too long
 To see another in my place—I *must* go, right or
 wrong.
 This furniture is jest as good as 't was when mother
 died;
 I've took sech pride in keepin' it—perhaps 't was
 sinful pride—
 But now, you 'll find a change, I guess, before this
 time next year;
 You 'll see how things will go to waste—well! well!
 I shan't be here.
 Who 'll patch and darn as I have done? not Jacob's
 wife, I know;

She'll read him bits of rhymin' stuff—and let his
 buttons go;
She'll talk in her new-fangled way of "woman's
 proper spear,"
And he, poor soul! won't never see the dust upon
 his cheer.
I trained up Jacob, as you know, to be so very neat,
And always scolded if he seemed too tired to wipe
 his feet,
I followed him with brush and broom and duster, all
 the day,
To make his home a cheerful place—and *now* what
 does he say?
That "cleanliness is plague enough to make a good
 man swear!"
He won't have too much cleanliness, no more, nor
 too much care.
So good-bye, Hannah, won't you write, and tell me
 what 's amiss?
'T would be a sort of comfort too, since things have
 come to *this*.
I'd like to know how Jacob does, and even Jacob's
 wife,
For somehow, leavin' them, it seems I'm leavin'
 half my life!

The Village Sewing Society.

“MIS’ JONES is late agen to-day—
I’d be ashamed now ef ’t was me.
Do n’t tell it, but I ’ve heerd folks say
She only comes to git her tea.”

“Law me! she need n’t want it *here*—
The Deacon’s folks ain’t much on eatin’;
They have n’t made a pie this year!
Of course, ’t won’t do to be repeatin’.

“But old Mis’ Jenkins says it’s true
(You know she lives just ’cross the way
And sees most everything they do);
She says she saw ’em tother day”—

“Hush, here comes Hannah!—how d’ ye do?
Why, what a pretty dress you ’ve got!”

“(Her old merino made up new—
I know it by that faded spot.)”

“Jest look! there’s Dr. Stebbins’ wife—”
“A bran-new dress and bunnit—well,
They say she leads him *such* a life—
But there! I promised not to tell.

“What 's that Mis' Brown? '*all friends*,' of course,
And you can see with your own eyes
That *that* gray mare 's the better horse,
Though gossipin' I do despise.”

“Poor Mary Allen 's lost her beau—”
“It serves her right, conceited thing!
She 's flirted awfully, I know.
Say, have you heard she kept his ring?”

“Listen! the clock is striking six—
Thank goodness! then it 's time for tea.”
“Now ain't that too much? Abby Mix
Has folded up her work! just see!”

“Why *can't* she wait until she 's told?
Yes, thank you, deacon, here we come.”
“(I hope the biscuits won't be cold,
No coffee? wish I was to hum.)”

“Do tell, Mis' Ellis—*did* you make
This cheese? the best I ever saw;
Such jumbles too (no jelly cake)—
I'm quite ashamed to take one more.”

“Good-bye! we 've had a first-rate time
And first-rate tea, I must declare—
Mis' Ellis' things are always prime;
(Well next week's meetin' won't be *there!*)”

The Clock Ghost.

“WHERE’S that old clock of father’s?” is
that what you want to know?

Wall, I wonder I hain’t told you *that* story long ago!
Set down, ef you’d like to hear it; but first I’ll
light the lamp,

For it’s sure to make me shiver, and my face gits
kinder damp.

Did *you* ever see a ghost? there—you need n’t begin
to laugh;

You’ll own it’s a solemn story before you’ve heard
the half—

I told it to Deacon Torrey, when he stopped to tea
one night,

And he said ’T was a curus vision, ef we could read
it right.

’T was jest after father’s funer’l, that ’Mandy Jane
says, says she:

“We’ll divide the furniture, Lyddy, but the clock
ought to come to *me*!

’T ain’t likely now that you’ll marry—you’re gittin’
too fur along—

And you know father allus promised—”

“ I know that, right or wrong,
The old clock shall stay in this kitchen!” says I, in
the peaceablest way—
But that was enough for 'Mandy—land sakes! how
she talked that day!
'T wa'n't no use tryin' to stop her—and Jotham, he
just sot by,
A-helpin' her on till I got riled, and “ 'Mandy,” I
says, says I:
“ You can take the clock for peace' sake, but mind
—*you do n't git the case!*”
And before she took in my meanin', the works and
the old white face
Was a-layin' there on the table—“ Now, 'Mandy
Jane,” says I:
“ Jest *take* your clock.” Wall, so she did, and went
without a “ good-by.”

That night I was kinder restless. The house was
so lonesome and still;
I tried to shet out the moonlight, for somehow it
gave me a chill.
I sot by the fire a-thinkin'—a-thinkin' of days gone
by,
When three of us used to set by this hearth—
Ebenezer, and 'Mandy and I—
Now one was dead and one married, and I was
livin' alone,
With no one left to love me—I cried jest then, I 'll,
own,

As I thought of a few old letters tied up with a
withered rose—
And the time was nigh onto midnight afore my
eyes would close.

Somethin' waked me all of a sudden—I started up
in my bed;
I was jest as cool and collected, but my hair most
riz on my head—
For I heerd the old clock tickin'—yes! *tickin'* as
plain as day—
As ef the case warn't empty, and the insides miles
away!
I could n't lay still no longer; I was narvous enough
to fly—
“Perhaps it's sent as a warnin',” I says to myself,
says I.
Then I come into this kitchen—there was the clock
in its place,
With the moonlight shinin' ghastly over its empty
face—
Sech a pale, blue light about it—in the corners the
gloom was thick—
Sech a deep, onearthly silence, with only that *tick,*
tick, tick!—
I could hear the pend'lum swingin', jest as it allus
swung,
And I tried to say, “I'm a-dreamin'” but the words
seemed froze on my tongue.
I crept back into the bedroom, I shet and bolted the
door,

I kivered my head with the bed-clothes, and says, " I
won't listen no more;"
But still I heerd it a-goin' *tick, tick*, so solemn and
slow—
I can hear it yet, though it happened nigh on to a
year ago.
No wonder my flesh was creepin'—no wonder the
candle burnt blue,
For that was the old clock's *sperrit* come back to
haunt me, I knew!
And says I to myself, says I: " Lyddy, ef you're
livin' at dawn of day,
You'd better write to 'Mandy to take the clock
away."

As soon as ever the sun rose, before the fire was lit,
Or the kittle biled for breakfast, that letter of mine
was writ—
'Mandy come back with her waggin, as pleased as
woman could be,
But 't warn't till I saw that clock-case out of sight
that I breathed free.
And though at first I missed it from its place behind
the door,
No money couldn't hire me to have it back no
more!

So now you've heerd the story, I hope you'll allus
agree
There's truth in apparitions, and the clock-ghost
appeared to me!

A Retrospect.

'TIS forty years ago to-day since Jacob and I
were wed—
Long, toilsome years, with more of care than com-
fort, I've often said.
But my eyes are clearer now—I see God's glory
shining through;
I see how my saddest, darkest days were brightened
more than I knew!
I was only a simple school-girl then, though Jacob
was twenty-three,
And my heart was full of foolish hopes, and dreams
that were not to be.
I'd always had an earnest wish, a craving deep and
strong,
For books and study—could it be that such a wish
was wrong?
At least 't was thwarted every way—I worked from
morn till night;
Then Jacob scolded if I read and “wasted candle
light.”
Besides, he never bought a book, and my own scanty
store
I almost knew by heart at last—I'd read them o'er
and o'er.

I loved a flower garden, too, but Jacob "had no time
For useless posies." In their stead he planted sage
and thyme,
Some parsley, leeks and peppers, in beds beside the
door,
And wondered "how a thrifty woman could wish
for any more?"
So in my few spare moments (ah! *few* they were
indeed),
I dug and raked and planted—I'd begged some
roots and seed—
Till in the summer days my flowers made all the
door-yard bright,
And filled my lonely, aching heart with something
like delight.
My little parlor was so bare, its furniture so plain,
I used to scan the empty walls with longings full of
pain.
I wanted books, and pretty prints, and curtains and
the rest,
But soon I learned to keep such wishes hidden in
my breast.
Once, I remember how I cried! a peddler was pass-
ing our way,
I wanted a little vase for flowers, and *I* had no
money to pay;
I ran to ask it of Jacob—he was up in the threshing
floor;
He said such things were nonsense, and—I can't
forget it—he *swore*!
Well! I had to tell the peddler he must call another
day,

And that pretty vase I wanted was bought by the
Widow Gray.

So passed two years—how long they were! how
wearily I went
About my daily tasks at length, my hope and cour-
age spent.
I think I must have died had not the Lord with
tender care
Sent little Alice to me then, a blossom sweet and
fair.
How oft, when aching head or limbs refused to bear
me through,
A kiss from those sweet baby lips would give me
strength anew.
My Alice—precious comforter—a woman grown is
she;
A wife, and children of her own are standing at her
knee,
And yet I always think of her a little laughing
child,
Whose clinging arms and loving words my saddest
hours beguiled.
The years went on—my little flock were added one
by one,
Three sturdy boys, then one more girl—my work
was never done.
But now my wants had fewer grown, I long had
ceased to care
For pretty bonnets, tasteful gowns, or ribbons in
my hair;

Even my ardent love of books was crowded out at
last,
And in my little garden plot the weeds grew thick
and fast.
But something better had come to me, and bade me
not repine;
My life was in my children's merged—their hopes,
their joys, were mine.
To teach, to aid, to sympathize in every joy and
need,
To know they loved and trusted me—was happiness
indeed.
And when they left me, my boys to work and win
in a wider sphere,
My Alice to marry the man she loved—their letters
kept them near.
From week to week, as I read the words of love and
cheer they sent,
And saw them nearing their goal, my heart was full
of a deep content:
A sweet, unselfish joy it was, that grows with every
year,
As the fulness of those young, eager lives flows back
to me, sitting here.
And I quite forget my loneliness, and the hardest
task grows light,
Knowing their hopes are blossoming fair where mine
met only blight.
Once every year my boys come home, and Alice,
she comes too.
Ah, well! my later years are crowned with joys my
youth ne'er knew.

'T is true, our house is shabby and old—the parlor
still looks bare;
The furniture is scarce improved by forty years of
wear;
The pretty porch I've planned so oft, to keep us
from the sun,
With roses climbing up the sides, has never been
begun!
A sorry place the homestead still—but Jacob, I
sometimes fear,
Is learning to love and hoard his gold more closely
with every year.
He's feebler than he was—ah, me! if he could only
know
That to work and save is not the best or the *whole*
of life below.
Sometimes I try (as I've tried to-day) to recall my
life again,
My withered hopes, my broken plans, my hours of
care and pain;
And I *know* a reason is hid beneath that I cannot
understand;
But He will make it plain to me when I reach the
better land.
So waiting, I thank my Lord, and rest upon His
guiding hand.

The Seamstress' Story.

SOLDY she sat in her rocking-chair,
A woman of forty, pale and plain,
There were streaks of gray in her scant, light hair,
On her brow deep furrows of care and pain.

Needle and thread from her hands had dropped,
The hands that nervously clasped and clung,
As with voice that faltered and often stopped
She spoke of the days when she was young.

“Yes ! it's twenty years since I saw him last—
Twenty years since we said ‘good bye.’
I've heard folks say time goes so fast—
They could n't have known such years as *I*.

“Twenty years ! I remember yet
Just how he spoke and looked and stood
When he said, ‘Now, Mary, you must n't forget
All you have promised’—as if I could !

“ ‘ There ’ll be many to tempt you away from me,
Never heed them, whatever they say ;
Wait for me, Mary, wait patiently,
And think of me always, by night and by day.

“ ‘ Never mind if the years *are* long,
I shall write when I ’ve time to spend ;
I shall be true and you must be strong,
And look to the end, Mary, look to the end !

“ ‘ One thing more, Mary, give it due heed—
Bear your joys and your sorrows alone ;
Then when I come I shall feel indeed
You have been always and truly my own.’

“ So he left me—’t was hard to bear—
My lonely life with never a friend,
But he wrote, as he said, when he ’d time to spare,
And I treasured his words and looked to the end.

“ I thought of him always, by night or by day,
Just as he bade me, his will was my law—
And I asked no help on my weary way,
Though often my heart was sad and sore.

“ Waiting thus for the years to pass
I never counted them as they rolled ;
Perhaps if I ’d cared to look in the glass
I might have seen I was growing old.

“ And so, when fifteen years had gone,
He sent for my picture, from over the sea ;
Ah ! when I sent it I might have known,
If I had been wise, what the end would be.

“ By the very next mail a letter came—
Not his—he could n’t be so unkind,
But his sister wrote and he signed his name,
To tell me that ‘ *John had changed his mind !*’

“ ‘ You see,’ she said, ‘ you are old and plain,
Too old for John’s wife, to tell the truth ’—
I laid down the letter and cried, with pain,
For had n’t I given *him* all my youth ?

“ Well ! there was nothing to do or say—
John had a right to change his mind,
I just went on in the same old way,
Only—I left my hopes behind.

“ There were some that tried to comfort me then,
Saying, ‘ Best be rid of a fickle heart,’
And ‘ John was no better than other men,’
But that never seemed to ease the smart.”

So she ended her simple tale—
’T was an old, old story, told oft before ;
For one heart will trust and one will fail
Until time and change shall be no more !

Jimmy O'Rourke's Troubles.

THAT was a sorry day for me, whin first I crossed
the say,
For shure I left my heart behind, wid pretty Biddy
McKay ;
We 'd bin a courtin' sivin years, an' the weddin' day
was set,
But times was bad in ould Ireland thin, an' money
hard to get.
My brother Patrick kep' writin' out an' urgin' me to
come,
So at last I sez, "Biddy, darlint, I'm goin' to thry
for a home ;
Jist wait for one year, mavourneen, an' see what
Jimmy can do—
Shure an' I'll work an' pinch an' save—*thin* darlint,
I'll sind for you !"
So Biddy promised to wait an' hope—she came to
the ship wid me,
And kissed me whin I said good-bye, though ivery
wan could see !

In course Pat met me at the dock, an' sez he :
 " Jimmy, man,
 There 's money for the arnin' here.' Sez I, thin,
 " Arn I can.
 I'm bound to make a home for Biddy, waitin' out
 there for me ;
 An' I 'll niver know contintment, Pat, till her swate
 face I see !"

I got a place as waiterman, an' worked wid might
 an' main
 To try an' plaze the Missus, an' forget the rale heart
 pain
 That would n't let me shlope o' nights for thinkin'
 of the day
 Whin Biddy kissed me on the ship before I crossed
 the say.

The year was shlippin' on before I saved up twinty
 pound—
 But thin I bought a draft for Biddy ; my head wint
 round an' round !

I wrote a letther beggin' her to come widout delay ;
 And axed the Missus' lave to go and post it that
 same day.

" Beggin' yer pardon, Ma'am," sez I, " If I might
 make so bould
 To find out how you sind yer letthers, I 'll know,
 jist if I 'm tould."

Wid that the Missus shmiles an' sez, " You have n't
 far to go ;
 We puts 'em in the lamp-post, James, it 's strange
 you did n't know."

Well, I was kind o' bashful like—I did n't say no
 more,
 But makes my bow, and out I walks—there, jist
 beyant the door,
 The lamp-post stood, bad luck to it ! so, climbin' up,
 I wint
 An' shtuck an' shqueezed the letther in : "There
 now," sez I, "it's sint :
 Begorra, it's not a handy way, to be climbin' up
 wid letthers !
 But, thin, Amerikins *is* quare, an' I'll not know
 more than my betthers."
 You'd scarce belave I got no answer—she niver
 wrote a line—
 I waited weeks, an' weeks on that, but Biddy made
 no sign.
 At last I tuk my pen in hand, an' axed for ould
 time's sake,
 If she would n't sind a word or two, for fear my
 heart would break.
 I tuk it to the Missus thin, and she put "Miss Biddy
 McKay !"
 (I thought my writin' might be bad and make it
 go astray) ;
 An' I wint into another sthreet an' tried a lamp-
 post there,
 But sorra an answer came to me ; my trouble was
 hard to bear.
 Wan day whin I was wonderin' what *could* the rea-
 son be,
 An' whether Biddy had taken up wid that rascal,
 Tommy Shee,

I thought that maybe some thievin' rogue had bin
lookin' after the lamps
An' shtealin' poor folks letthers too, bekase of the
postage stamps !
So I sint her one more letther, wid the stamps inside
so nate,
An' wrote it on the kiver, too, that folks need n't
think I 'd chate.
An' I wint a long ways off now, to a lamp-post
near the river,
But all the same, for Biddy's forgot, and she has n't
answered, niver !
So my heart it's broke intirely, wid the watchin' an'
the watin',
An' since I've lost swate Biddy McKay, the rest of
the gurls I'm hatin' !

What Biddy Said in the Police Court.

YIS, luk at me now, if ye can, Tim;
Luk in me face if ye dare !
It 's bruised an' it 's ugly—I know it—
But sorra a bit do ye care,
Ye dhrunken—I 'm ready, yer Honor;
I 'll show ye 's the mark of Tim's fist,
An' the black an' the blue bruise on me shoulther
Where he pushed me agin the ould chist.

Sure I will—do n't be winkin' at me, Tim;
I 'm done wid ye now, ye can say,
An' if ye 're sint up for a twelvemonth
It's rejoicin' I 'd be ivery day—
Whisht, officer—what 's that ye 're sayin' ?
“ Me complaint ? ” why, what 's ailin' ye, man ?
For sure an' I 'm afther complainin',
Yer Worship, as fast as I can !

Whin ye kim home last night, now that 's throe, Tim,
The place was so purty an' nate,
Wid such ilegant corn bafe and inyons
Set out on me blue chaney plate;
An' Molly a waitin' to show ye
The beautiful medal she'd got,
An' me wid me fut on the cradle
A kapin' the tay good an' hot.

But, Tim, ye 'd bin dhrinkin', ye blackguard;
Yer wages was gone, ivery cint;
An' ye b-a-ate an' abused me a-an' M-ol-ly
For shpakin' a wurd of the r-r-rint;
But whin ye turned over the table,
An' smash ! wint me plate on the floor,
An' angel cud niver kape silence,
So thin—I 'll confess it—I swore !

Jist wance, an' ye need n't have minded,
Well knowin' me timper is quick,
But wurra ! ye knocked down the shtove, Tim,
And batthered the wall wid yer shtick—
Yis, an' broke the best chair, too, ye spalpeen !
No wonder the naybors tuk fright,
Wid Molly an' Patsy, both scramin'
Outside, in the cowl'd winter's night. * * * *

What ! *fine him tin dollars*, yer Honor ?
Och, shure now, that 's hard on poor Tim ;
'T was just the laste bit of a scrimmage—
There 's husbands far worsen nor him !

But niver mind, darlint, here 's money—
I 'd saved up a thrifle, ye see,
By washin' an' clanin'—I 'll spind it,
Mavourneen, to let you go free.

So come along home wid her Biddy—
There 's breakfast expectin' ye there ;
Sure ye 're needin' the bit an' the sup, Tim,
Ye 're lukin' so white, yis, an' quare.
See ! Molly 's outside there, a smilin',
An' fifty cints left yit, asthore.
Come on, Tim—good mornin', yer Honor,
I won't be a-throublin' ye 's more !

The Newsboy.

WANT any papers, Mister?
Wish you 'd buy 'em of me—
Ten year old, an' a fam'ly,
An' bizness dull, you see.
Fact, boss! 'There's Tom an' Tibby,
An' Dad, an' Mam, an' Mam's cat—
None on 'em earnin' money.
What do you think of that?

Could n't Dad work? Why yes, Boss;
He's workin' for Gov'ment now—
They give him his board for nothin',
All along of a drunken row.
An' Mam? well, she's in the poorhouse,
Been there a year or so;
So I 'm takin' care of the others;
Doin' as well as I know.

Tibby my sister? Not much, Boss;
She's a kitten, a real Maltee;
I picked her up last Summer—
Some boys was a drownin' of she;
Throwed her inter a hogshead;
But a p'liceman come along,
So I jest grabbed up the kitten
And put for home, good an' strong.

And Tom's my dog; he and Tibby
Haint never quarrelled yet—

They sleeps in my bed in Winter,
An' keeps me warm—you bet !
Mam 's cat sleeps in the corner,
With a piller made of her paw—
Can 't she growl like a tiger
If any one comes to our straw !

Ought n't to live so ? Why, Mister,
What 's a feller to do ?
Some nights, when I 'm tired an' hungry,
Seems as if each on 'em knew—
They 'll all three cuddle around me,
Till I git cheery, and say :
Well, p'raps I 'll have sisters an' brothers,
An' money an' clothes, too, some day !

But if I do git rich, Boss,
(An' a lecturin' chap one night
Said newsboys could be Presidents
If only they acted right);
So, if I was President, Mister,
The very first thing I 'd do,
I 'd buy poor 'Tom an' Tibby
A dinner—an' Mam 's cat, too !

None o' your scraps an' leavin's,
But a good square meal for all three;
If you think I 'd skimp my friends, Boss,
That shows you do n't know *me*.
So 'ere 's yer papers—come, take one;
Gimme a lift if you can—
For now you 've heard my story,
You see I 'm a fam'ly man !

The Sad Story of Blobbs and his Pullet.

IN a tiny country villa lived our Blobbs, but all
alone ;
Never wife nor chubby children this staid bachelor
had known.
Yet—for hearts *must* cling to something—he had
made himself a pet
Of a little snow-white pullet, with her wings just
tipped with jet.
Daily feeding and caressing, these had won the pul-
let's heart ;
Following close her master's footsteps, seldom they
were far apart ;
And his love grew deeper, stronger, with the passing
of each day—
“Wiser far than any woman,” wicked Blobbs was
wont to say.

Near by rose a wondrous structure—architects their
 brains had racked—
 Cross between a Chinese temple and a cruet-stand,
 in fact.
 This the pretty pullet's dwelling; here she hastened
 every night;
 Perched on high, became a *rooster* till the dawning
 of the light.
 One sad day a Yankee peddler, glib, persuading, pas-
 sing by,
 Gazed at Blobbs and that poor pullet with a calcu-
 lating eye.
 From his wagon's deep recesses drew out, smiling
 wickedly,
 "Johnson's Patent Hen-Persuader;" then to guile-
 less Blobbs said he :
 "Here 's a marvelous invention ! In this box you
 see a nest ;
 Hens at once will lay an egg here, lured to do their
 very best.
 Then behold ! this sliding bottom lets the egg drop
 out of view,
 And the hen, somewhat bewildered, lays at once
 egg number two !"
 'Twould be useless to repeat all that this wily ped-
 dler said ;
 This suffices, Blobbs, unwary, by his specious tongue
 misled,
 Bought the "Patent Hen-Persuader," set his snow-
 white pullet on,
 Locked them both within the hen-house ere he went
 to town that morn.

Business then engrossed him fully, till, with num-
m'rous cares beset,
Who can wonder that the pullet and her nest he
should forget?
Nothing all day to remind him ; but returning late
at night,
Flashed a sudden recollection, and his cheek grew
pale with fright.
Rushing madly from the station, straight he sought
the hen-house door,
Called his pet in tones entreating. Ah ! she 'll
never answer more !
Full of gloomiest forebodings, in he dashes ; finds
the nest
Overflowing with its treasures—yes, she 's done her
level best.
Forty-seven eggs ! and near them head and tail and
wings still lay,
For the poor ambitious pullet thus had laid herself
away !

An Ideal Shattered.

SERAPHINA, young and lovely, with a fortune
at command,
Had a host of ardent suitors, each aspiring to her
hand ;
But she smiled not on their wooing, and she cared
not for their woes,
For she loved a bright ideal, with a haughty Roman
nose.
In her waking dreams she saw him—tall, with raven
locks above,
While beneath his brow majestic curved the *nose*
that she could love—
And all other men grew hateful, and with longing
look she cried,
“Come ! a life’s devotion waits thee ! come and
claim thy willing bride !”
Love, with soft entreating accents, sought in vain
the maiden’s heart ;
Eyes sent out their killing glances, manly figures did
their part,

All in vain : her virgin fancy by the *nose* was cap-
tive led,
And to each who came a-wooing, "No," was all the
maiden said.
Sternest Fate brought retribution. At a brilliant
ball, one night,
Seraphina met her hero—that loved nose beamed
on her sight.
Colonel Montagu Augustus (name as high-bred as
his looks ;
What a pity truth must spoil it by that vile cogno-
men, *Snooks* !)
Tall, with raven locks and whiskers, and—most po-
tent charm of all—
Roman nose, whose grand proportions held her very
soul in thrall.
Well, the story needs no telling: each seemed to the
other drawn,
Talking, walking, glancing, dancing, soon the bliss-
ful hours had gone.
Colonel Montagu Augustus in the graceful *rôle* of
lover,
Seraphina gazing fondly at the nose that towered
above her.
Meeting upon meeting followed: luckless lovers, one
by one,
Saw the fortress of her fancy yield ere siege was
well begun.
Ere the winter snows had vanished, ere the blos-
soming of spring,
At her side his nose was carried, on her finger shone
his ring.

'Mid the disappointed suitors who for Seraphina
 pined,
One rash youth to schemes of vengeance had de-
voted heart and mind.
"Words are useless," so he answered to the friends
 who would advise—
"Words are useless while my rival flaunts that nose
 before my eyes!"
And he hastened from their presence with such an-
guish in his air
That he filled them with forebodings dark and deep
 as his despair
That same evening Seraphina and her charming
 Montagu,
Tired of crowds and gay confusion, stole an hour to
 bill and coo.
Side by side, their hands close-clasping, he then:
 "Dearest, name the day."
She, enraptured, softly sighing, "Who that knows
 thee *could* say nay?"
In that moment, hark! a footstep, then a hand flung
 wide the door—
Seraphina's cast-off suitor gazes on her face once
 more.
"Mr. Simpkins!" cries the maiden: "unexpected
 pleasure this—
Colonel Snooks—*so* glad to see you" (though she
 didn't *look* her bliss).
Simpkins answered not her greeting. Onward, with
 a single stride,
Past the chair she would have offered, he had
 reached the Colonel's side.

Something strange in his demeanor thrilled poor
Seraphina's heart
With a sense of coming evil, but in vain her scream
and start.
"Seraphina, I have lost you," Simpkins mutters as
he stands;
"Well I know what came between us"—wildly
clenching both his hands.
"But if I might wreak my vengeance on the cause
of all my woe,
Pull that nose once, then, contented, I could from
your presence go."
Quick as thought his hand is lifted—he has grasped
that lovely nose—
See! he starts! he pales! he trembles! see his
nerveless grasp unclose!
While poor Montagu Augustus, groaning sinks into
a chair,
With too little nose to speak of, and a face of white
despair.
But the crumbling waxen fragments, as from Simp-
kins' hand they fell,
And were scattered o'er the carpet, had their own
sad tale to tell.
Seraphina's scream of terror died in anguish sore
away;
"*Where's your nose?*" she questioned faintly, then
in deadly swoon she lay;
For the fearful truth had smote her, as she caught
the Colonel's eye—
He had lost his nose in battle; she had loved a
waxen lie!

Diamond Out Diamond.

SOLOMON SCHAFF was a cunning knave,
Eager to make, and ready to save,
Fond as a barber might be of a "shave,"
If only the law its sanction gave.
Now the reason for this recital,
Is merely to show that in saving his pelf
This cunning sharper outwitted himself,
And met with a fit requital.

On his fortieth birthday, Solomon Schaff
Began to think of a "better half,"
And to tire of his bachelor living.
Of course, as *he* was abnormally thin,
He fancied a fair one with double chin;
"I 'm lean and she 's fat,
There 's profit in that,"
Quoth he; "I get more than I 'm giving!"

"Courtship 's a very extravagant thing,"
Said Solomon Schaff. "She 'll look for a ring,
For bonbons, bouquets and all that;
But shall *I* waste my cash
On such profitless trash?
No, indeed; I 'm too sharp for a flat!"

Howe'er, when the wedding day drew near,
Mr. Schaff was seized with a bright idea,

So he found out an artist needy—
“I want a portrait, you want some cash,”
Briefly he said, to young Rubens Flash.

“A half-length will do,
That 's half-price for you;
You 'd better agree, you 're so seedy.”

Well, Flash was poor, so the bargain was struck.
“He! ho!” said Solomon; “I 'm in luck!”

And he couldn 't smother a titter.
Flash worked away like a busy elf,
But he whistled softly and smiled to himself,
As he gazed on his scheming sitter.

A week had sped, then, to Schaff's delight,
Flash wrote him: “*Your picture is finished quite,
And sent as you gave me direction,
Most carefully packed, to Miss Caroline Reed;
Please hand to the bearer the price as agreed,
For I 'm sure you 'll be
In an ecstasy
When you give it a careful inspection.*”

Quickly the cheque was written and sent,
And the evening brought Solomon, well content,
To sit by the side of his charmer;
But, alas! what cruel reverse is this?

She turns away from his proffered kiss,
And with looks of scorn,
She bids him "Begone !"
As if his mere presence could harm her.

"What is it ?" poor Solomon, wondering, cries;
The lady surveys him with wrathful surprise,
Then suddenly raising a curtain;
"Your present," in angriest tones she exclaimed ;
And there was a picture, most showily framed,
But veiled in a shadow uncertain.

Nearer and nearer then Solomon drew,
But he starts back aghast ! What is this meets
his view ?

A half-length the artist had painted ;
But, dreadful to tell, the *half* that Flash chose
Began at Sol's watch chain and stopped at his toes !

"Twas too fearful a joke ;
Poor Schaff never spoke,
But prone on the carpet he fainted

My story is told—
Miss Reed, stern and cold,
Would listen to no explanation ;
And Solomon's life
Was uncheered by a wife,
To his own great chagrin and vexation.

Old Lochinvar.

©H, old Lochinvar drove down the broad street,
No equipage finer, no steeds half so fleet ;
And save his smart groom he companion had none;
He rode in his holiday garb all alone.
So successful in trade, so famed near and far,
There was never man richer than old Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered at Jenkins' front door,
'Mong bridemaids and kinsmen and brothers, a
score ;
Then spoke the bride's father, with bow and glad
smile
(Though the handsome young bridegroom grew
pallid the while) ;
“ Great honor you do us—so famed near and far—
Pray, what is your pleasure, milord Lochinvar ?”

“ I love your fair daughter, but cruel is fate !
I heard but this morning that I was too late.
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
To whirl in one dance. It is vain to repine,
For maidens in plenty—young, lovely they are—
Would gladly be bride to the old Lochinvar.”

The bride smiled her sweetest, he took her fair
hand,

“The gayest of waltzes !” he cried to the band ;
She looked down to blush, she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lip and a flash in her eye,
His arm round her waist ’ere her bridegroom could
bar :

“My bride shall have millions !” quoth old Loch-
invar.

Though bent was his form, though poor was his
pace,

Yet every beholder said only : “What grace !”
While her father did smile, and her mother did
bow,

And the bridegroom drew near with a frown on his
brow,

And the bridemaids whispered, “T were better
by far

To wed this fair creature to rich Lochinvar !”

A ring on her finger, a word in her ear.

They had reached the hall door, and his carriage
stood near ;

So light in her seat the fair maiden upsprang,
So quickly the carriage-door closed with a bang !

“She is won ! We are off ! In love, as in war,
The cleverest wins,” laughed old Lochinvar.

An Intercepted Letter.

NOW, Bella, darling, *please* do n't scold—I'm horrid mean, I know,
And such a sweet, long letter, too, you sent me weeks ago !
I read it, dear, a thousand times, and carried it about
For days and days, but then you know I'm always going out.
I have n't had an evening to myself for—I can't tell—
And mornings I'm completely fagged, as you can fancy, Bell.
I've had a lovely winter, though—such lots of nice new beaus,
And one, the nicest of them all—but, Bella, don't suppose
I've got a tender secret, dear—no ! no ! I'm not a dunce ;
He's splendid, but he's *poor*, and so that ends the thing at once.
I met him in the country, Bell—the loveliest dark gray eyes !
He's rather quiet—giggling men I always did despise !
Of course we flirted—moonlight strolls, and rows upon the river,

And flowers and music—how he sings! it makes
one's heartstrings quiver!
He's not too tall—I've changed my mind on that
and other things;
The tallest men are not the best for husbands or for
kings.
And Fred—my favorite name, you know—but there!
you need n't fear,
I'm not in love—not in the least—believe me, Bella,
dear!
I would n't marry—no, not I—an angel from the
skies,
Unless he was a millionaire—I've grown so worldly
wise.
I've told Fred so a dozen times, it's only fair, you
see;
He likes my frankness, and besides, it leaves us both
quite free.
(Not that he cares for other girls—he's always
satisfied
To be my escort, or to spend his evenings at my
side.)
And then he says such lovely things, that quite as-
tonish me—
Why, Bell, I never knew before what friendship
ought to be!
Good-bye, forgive this stupid scrawl—but then,
there's nothing new.
Write soon and often, Bella dear, to yours most
fondly,

SUE.

P. S.—

You'll be astonished, Bella, but—I wrote this yesterday,
And Fred has made an offer since, and—dear, what *could* I say?
He's such a handsome fellow, and he loves me, oh!
so dearly—
He says we'll be so happy, that—now tell me Bell,
sincerely,
Would *you* have coldly turned away, and answered
him with “*No*?”
When all the time you knew quite well he did n't
mean to go!
Would it have been a Christian act to crush his
hopes like that?
Besides, I think I'd like to try housekeeping on
a flat.
I've learned (you need n't laugh) to make such excellent
corn-bread;
I mean to be the very best of wives to darling
Fred!
Of course you'll be my bridesmaid, Bell—I have n't
fixed the day,
But Fred's in such a hurry now I don't know what
to say.

Eunice Gray.

RICHARD Latham and Eunice Gray
Stood in the porch one summer's day,
She was the belle of our little town,
Lithe and graceful, sparkling and brown,
Ready for frolic or mischief or mirth,
As winsome a creature as trod this earth.

He, tall and slender, pale and fair,
With a serious smile and a studious air,
Grave and silent, yet strange to say,
He had lost his heart to Eunice Gray ;
And he stood there pleading as if for life—
Wooing the gypsy to be his wife,
While Eunice listened with deepening frown,
Crumpling a rose in her fingers brown.

She turned at last with her cheeks aflame,
Though cold and hard her answer came :
“ Richard, you are too poor for wooing—
To wed you now would be love's undoing.
Go—seek your fortune—or plead no more.
You have heard, perchance, of a wise old saw—
‘ When in at the door comes poverty,
Then out at the window love will flee ’ ?
And,” laughing lightly, “ I fear 't is true
That *my* love would never come back to *you*.”

'T was June once more—at the ten years' close
Once more in the porch she gathered a rose,
But her pale, still face sharp contrast made
To the dainty flower with which she played,
And she sang in a low, soft, quivering tone:

*"Ah? youth and hope together have flown!
Sweet youth! sweet hope! they went together—
Can this be June?
To me it seems like wintry weather.
Life out of tune!
I have waited long, my heart is weary—
Once at my feet
Love poured such treasure. Ah! pride is dreary,
And love is sweet."*

Over the threshold a shadow fell,
And a voice that Eunice remembered well
Answered her song: "Can love be sweet?
Why, once you spurned it, laid at your feet!
Now I have brought you a golden key,
But the heart it fits is too poor for me!
That was a foolish boy you knew
Who knelt for a worthless boon to sue—
That was a maiden vain and cold
Who bartered his passionate love for gold—
Now in their places stand to-day
A pallid woman, a man grown gray,
Whose chill, sad touch—whose weak desire
Can never rekindle the long-dead fire!"

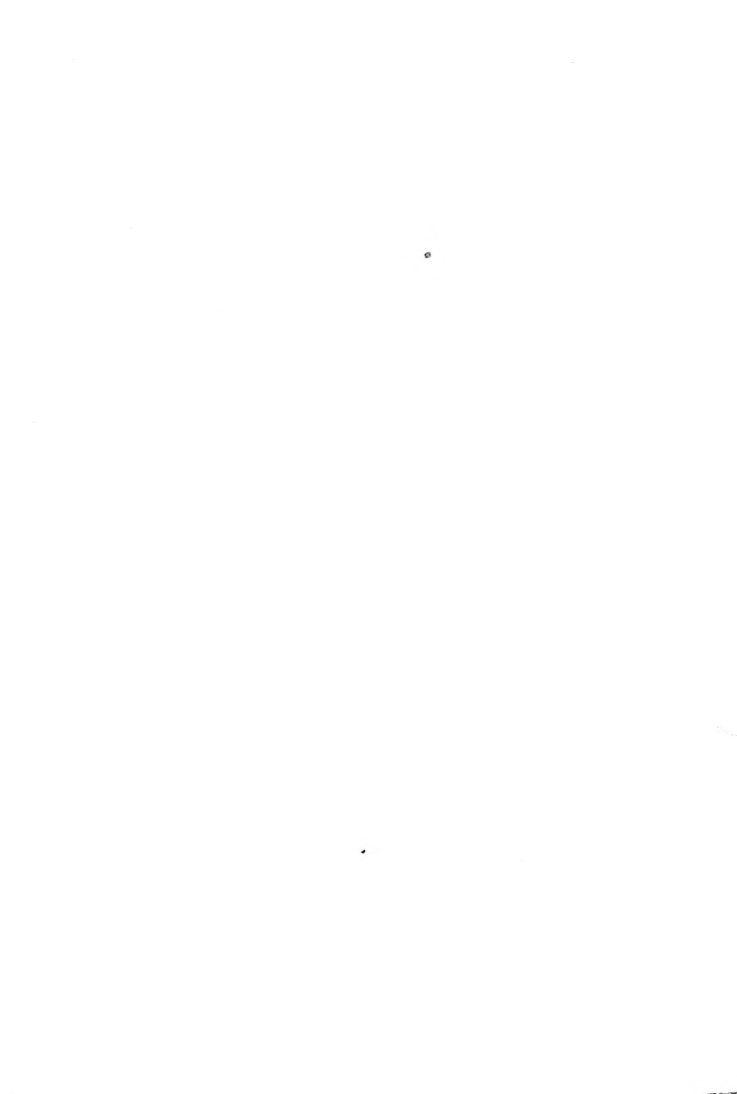
Jack's Letter.

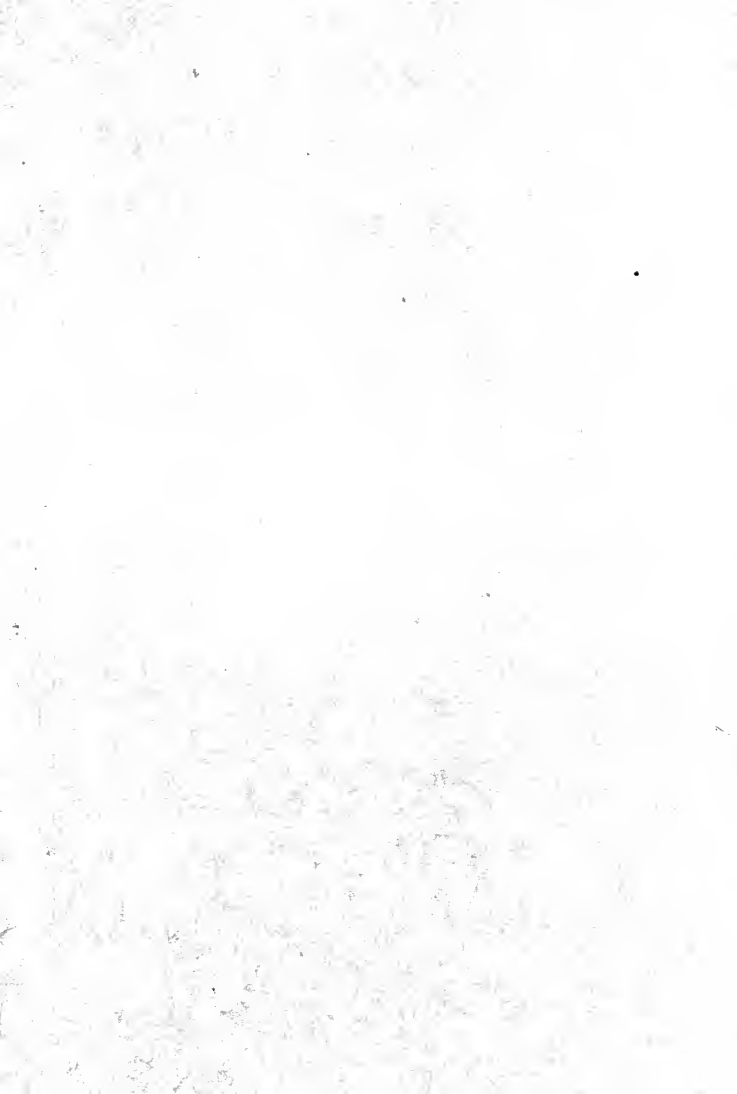
I STOOD by the Post Office window one day
In our little rustic village,
When came an old dame, whose air seemed to say,
She knew less of letters than tillage.

“Here’s something for you, ma’am,” was what the
clerk said,
As he handed the missive duly;
But the poor old woman just shook her head,
She could n’t read writing, truly.

“Do let me help you,” at once I began;
She smiled and handed it over.
I saw, as my eye through the letter ran,
That it came from her Jack, the rover.

“*Dear Mother*”—the writing was really so bad
I stopped here and heard her mutter,
As I puzzled it out—“Ay, bless the lad,
It’s from Jack—*he always did stutter!*”





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